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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 7041
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4723
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3389
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7852
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1958
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5284
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1481
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INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7576

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Shara, Syria/India, Nasrallah, Iraq, Palestinian
Territories, Middle East Peace (8/15)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on August 15 reported a meeting with journalists in Damascus by Vice President Shara on August 14 confirming that Syria has no intention of waging war against Israel to restore occupied Golan, but he accused Israel for seeking "any excuse to launch a war." "Israel knows we don't want war. We should always be ready to respond to Israeli aggression, but Syria will not start a war," Shara said. "People on Syria's streets do not want war, although they will not accept anything less than Israeli withdrawal from the whole of occupied Golan. The Arab initiative is clear in this regard and we support it," Shara said. "Israel wants any excuse to launch a war," Shara added saying that any preparations Syria was making were defensive in nature." Shara criticized the role of Saudi Arabia in the region, describing it as "paralyzed." He said that President Asad proposed to hold a summit with King Abdullah and President Mubarak, but "they were not authorized to hold such a meeting," referring to the US. Shara also denied claims by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice about the existence of tension between his country and Iran. Shara described relations between Syria and Iran as strategic, and based on understanding and accord regarding regional issues. Shara also reiterated Syria's position towards regional issues, particularly those in Iraq, the Palestinian territories and Lebanon.

On Syrian-Indian relations, papers featured the visit to India on August 14 by FM Mouallem who called for a strategic partnership between Syria and India, asking India to play a bigger role in the peace process in the Middle East saying that New Delhi must use its growing relations with Washington to promote stability in the region. Mouallem conferred with senior Indian officials. Talks tackled horizons of mutual cooperation between the two countries. Mouallem also announced that President Asad would pay a visit to India within a year to promote bilateral relations.

All papers featured a speech by Hizbollah SecGen Hassan Nasrallah on August 14 commemorating the 1st anniversary of the July War. Nasrallah warned Israel against launching another war against Lebanon, saying any attempt to attack his country "will be faced with a great surprise likely to change the fate of the war and the region." He said that his group supports the mediation efforts by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri in the upcoming week in a bid to reach a solution to the ten-month-old political impasse. "We support a compromise in Lebanon and we warn the Lebanese against

attempts undertaken by the United States and some Lebanese politicians to hamper any resolutions to the crisis," he said. Nasrallah addressed Arabs, rather than their leaders, and thanked them for their "moral support" during the war. "We did not ask for more," he added. "We must all realize that had the resistance lost the war, not only Lebanon, Syria and Palestine would have suffered from negative repercussions but also Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt," Nasrallah said.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Vice President Shara in an important meeting with Journalists: We are committed to peace... We do not seek war... We reject capitulation... We want the forthcoming Arab Summit in Damascus to be a summit of solidarity... President Bush's peace Conference is based on illusion and has no clear objectives... Syrian -Iranian relations as strategic...." (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 8/15)

"Foreign Minister Mouallem continues his meetings in New Delhi and discusses means of boosting cooperation and establishing a strategic partnership with India" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/15)

"On the first anniversary of the Lebanese resistance victory and the Israeli aggression defeat, Secretary General of Hizbollah Nasrallah: We promise Zionists great surprises if they attack us... The resistance revived hope of the Arab nation and presented an alternative to liberate the land" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 8/15)

"Seven Palestinians martyred in a bloody day in Gaza. Israeli Foreign Minister: Reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas is a big mistake" (Independent al-Watan, 8/15)

"A massacre in Mosul. 175 Iraqis victimized by three car bombs. Nine US soldiers killed. A US helicopter is downed" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/15)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Shameful Achievements"

Omar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/15): "The American people definitely know that President Bush's talk about achievements and victories in Iraq and Afghanistan is deliberate deception given the number of deaths among US troops and the huge material losses that the United States has suffered....

"In Afghanistan, Taliban controls most of the regions of this war-stricken country, and the NATO forces failed to achieve 'miracles' in five years of occupation of Afghanistan....

"In Iraq, what US forces and mercenaries are doing is nothing but deliberate killing of Iraqis, fragmentation of the Iraqi homeland, and total destruction of the country, while the companies of colonialist looters are pumping out Iraq's oil without controls....

"We wonder if the one million Iraqis killed in the war were members of Al-Qa'eda....Who but the American occupation brought Al-Qaeda to Iraq...?

"Americans, more than anyone else, now realize that they are being fought in Iraq by a popular resistance that rejects occupation and defends its land and people. This resistance targets only the foreign occupation army and mercenaries who are fighting under its banner. Americans and all the nations of the world are fed up with the lies and charlatanism of the US Administration and its practices, which will remain a black blot in modern US history."

"Not Inciting against Iraqis, but Serving Them"

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Ibrahim Darraji, an editorialist in independent al-Watan, wrote (8/15): "Syria, through its hosting of 1.5 million Iraqi refugees, is taking the biggest brunt and paying the tax of the American occupation of Iraq in a way that is exhausting its economy and infrastructure and increasing the suffering of Syrian citizens...."

"Most of the Western promises of help for Syria to cope with the Iraqi refugee problem remain just promises.... The Syrian government must think in a realistic and practical way about how to handle this crisis, to deal with the West in the same way and the logic it understands, to make decisive decisions embodying Syria's suffering, and to transfer the burden to the main party that caused it...."

"We understand that pan-Arab, ethical, and human considerations that made Syria open its border to Iraqi refugees, but the price must not be paid by Syria alone. We are not inciting against Iraqis in Syria but actually serving them by this call because the party that was the reason behind their expulsion and displacement must bear the responsibility and provide them with the requirements of a dignified life...."

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"Syrian Policy and Credibility of Peace-Making"
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Ahmad Suwwan, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/15): "Syria, which sticks to the bases, principles, and elements

of a genuine, just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the region, presents a model and example of political credibility, sound decision-making, and successful analysis when it stresses that the removal of the Israeli occupation from all the occupied Arab territories will lead the region toward peace, security, stability, calm, and constructive and fruitful cooperation...."

"Syria has never been the problem; it has always been part of the solution.... Israel, as the occupying power, is the problem, and it must meet the requirements of a just peace.... The United States, for its part, needs to be an honest broker, not a party biased toward occupation...."

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"One Year Past the July Aggression; How the Lebanese Resistance turned Magic against the Magician"
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Yunus Ibrahim, a commentator in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (8/15): "The July 2006 war upset balances, changed equations, smashed Israel's arrogance, liberated the Arabs and helped them break free from the complex of fear and lack of self confidence. What Arabs need to do now is study history thoroughly to see what the nation has come through over its long history. They will find that success and victory are always linked to awareness, determination, and faith, while failure is linked to division, fragmentation, and pinning hopes on others for salvation...."

"Cheney's Wars"

Sa'id Musallam, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (8/15): "US Vice President Dick Cheney, who reportedly controls the Bush administration completely, was the one who pushed this administration toward foreign wars to fulfill his own ambitions, primarily his financial greed, out of his instinctive love for domination and hegemony and the use of force to subjugate others...."

"Cheney embraces rancorous thought against Islam and Arabism.... Cheney's agenda for the next stage will focus on wars and violence despite the many failures that his plan has sustained, whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, or elsewhere. He is determined to open fronts and divide the region using whatever time and military and financial power are available to him, even if this ultimately leads to the destruction of the empire over the heads of its hawks, thinking that he will win what he personally seeks."

Corbin